Fact Sheet: Long-Chain Perfluoroalkyl Carboxylate (LCPFAC) Chemicals

Q1. What are LCPFAC chemical substances?

The long-chain perfluoroalkyl carboxylates (LCPFAC) category of chemicals includes perfluorooctanoic acid -- known as PFOA or C8 -- and other chemicals.

These chemicals are used to impart valuable properties including fire resistance and oil, stain, grease, and water repellency.

Learn more about the results of EPA and industry phase-out of these chemicals in the marketplace.

Q2. What action is EPA taking?

EPA is proposing a Significant New Use Rule (SNUR) under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). The proposed rule would require manufacturers (including importers) of LCPFAC chemicals and processors of these chemicals to notify EPA at least 90 days before starting or resuming new uses of these chemicals. This notification would provide EPA the opportunity to evaluate the new use and, if necessary, take action to prohibit or limit the activity.

Q3 Are importers and processors of these chemical substances as part of articles included in this proposed SNUR?

The notification requirement would apply to anyone who intends to import the chemical substances, including as part of products, or domestically produce or process these chemicals for any new use.

Q4. Why is EPA concerned about LCPFACs?

LCPFAC chemical substances are very persistent in the environment and have been found at very low levels in the blood of the general U.S. population. Studies indicate that LCPFAC chemicals substances, such as PFOA, can cause developmental and other adverse effects.

Q5. What products containing LCPFACs are available to consumers?

These chemicals are used in a wide range of industrial applications and the manufacture of consumer goods, and may be found in cleaners, textiles, leather, paper and paints, fire-fighting foams, and wire insulation.

Learn more about the results of EPA and industry phase-out of these chemicals in the marketplace.

Q6. Should consumers avoid products with LCPFACs?

Major pathways that enable PFOA, in very small quantities, to get into human blood are not yet fully understood. As mentioned, PFOA is used to make fluoropolymers, and it can also be released by the transformation of some fluorinated telomers. However, consumer products made with fluoropolymers and fluorinated telomers, including Teflon® and other trademark products, are not PFOA. Rather, some of them may contain trace amounts of PFOA and other related perfluorinated chemicals as impurities. The information that EPA has available does not indicate that the routine use of consumer products poses a concern. At present, there are no steps that EPA recommends that consumers take to reduce exposures to PFOA.

Q7. What other action is EPA taking on LCPFAC chemical substances?

In the late 1990's, EPA received information indicating that PFOS, the first of a related group of chemicals for which health concerns were raised, was widespread in the blood of the general population, and presented concerns for persistence, bioaccumulation, and toxicity. Following discussions between EPA and 3M, the manufacturer of PFOS and PFOS-related chemicals, the company terminated production of these chemicals. Findings on PFOS led EPA to review similar chemicals, including the LCPFAC category of chemicals. The Agency determined that they presented concerns similar to PFOS and is now taking this action to address potential risks.

Since 2000, the Agency has taken various actions to help minimize the potential impact of the chemical substances on human health and the environment, including the publication of three Significant New Use Rules on PFAS chemical substances, the implementation of the 2010/2015 PFOA Stewardship Program since 2006, publication of a final SNUR on PFAS and LCPFAC chemical substances in carpets in 2013, and the review over 150 substitutes for LCPFAC chemical substances under EPA's New Chemicals Program. Although such actions are important steps to reducing exposure to these chemicals, EPA continues to be concerned with these chemicals and is consequently taking additional actions under the TSCA, including this SNUR, to address the potential risks from these chemicals.

Q8. What is the 2010/15 PFOA Stewardship Program?

In January 2006, EPA launched the 2010/15 PFOA Stewardship Program, in which the eight major companies in the industry committed voluntarily to reduce facility emissions and product content of PFOA and related chemicals on a global basis by 95 percent no later than 2010, and to work toward eliminating emissions and product content of these chemicals by 2015.

In August 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported a 41 percent reduction of PFOA in human blood from 1999 – 2010. This decline is largely attributed to EPA's efforts on perfluorinated chemicals.

Daikin, DuPont, 3M/Dyneon and Solvay Solexis have met the program's intermediate goal of a 95 percent reduction in global emissions and product content by 2010. The eight participating companies continue to reduce emissions as well as overall product content of long-chain perfluorinated chemicals and have informed EPA that they are on track to phase out LCPFACs by the end of 2015.

More information on the 2010/15/PFOA Stewardship Program:
http://www.epa.gov/oppt/pfoa/pubs/stewardship/index.html